



BUSBRIDGE CE (Aided) JUNIOR SCHOOL

School Attendance Policy



**This policy was updated by the Governing Body in the Autumn term 2024
It is reviewed annually by the School Leadership Team**

(version 11.02.2025)

INTRODUCTION

The school staff and governors firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

EXPECTATIONS

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly, punctually and prepared appropriately for the day;
- Discuss with their class teacher or phase leader, any problems that may deter them from attending school.

We expect that all parents or carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Provide contact details for parents/carers and additional emergency contacts for their child
- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that the children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- Ensure that they contact the school whenever the children is unable to attend school;
- Contact the school on the first day of a child's absence explaining the reason for absence;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;
- Refrain from taking holidays in term time.

We expect that school staff will:

- Provide a caring and welcoming atmosphere for children in a safe learning environment
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, in the morning and afternoon;
- Monitor every pupil's attendance. The school office will issue a fortnightly attendance report to the Head teacher, outlining overall attendance numbers and the attendance of any children in the Persistently Absent category (attendance is below 90%);

- Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil is absent where no message has been received (by 10am at the latest);
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence;
- Encourage good attendance;
- Make initial enquiries of parents or carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Attendance Advice Officer.

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

Busbridge CE Junior School encourages regular attendance in the following ways by;

- Providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- Responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- Monitoring attendance
- Publishing and displaying attendance statistics;
- Celebrating good and improved attendance;

RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- If no email, note or telephone call is received from the parent or carer the school will make every effort to contact them by 10am to ascertain the reason for absence from school.
- If the school is unable to contact the parent /carer the school will continue to try. In the meantime, the school will also contact alternative contacts held for the pupils in order to establish the pupil's whereabouts. Should there be pre-existing concerns about a child's welfare, or in the case that no contact can be made to establish why a child is absent from school, the police or other linked professionals may be called to support the school.
- The school will continue to try to contact the parent or carer and invite them into school to discuss their concerns.
- The school will tell parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service;
- Monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action or court prosecution.

CHANGING SCHOOLS

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Busbridge CE Junior School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school;
- The new home address, if relevant

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

ILLNESS

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on each and every day of absence by 9.15am either in person or by telephone. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that must be in school time. An Absence Request Form (Appendix A) for these absences should be completed in advance wherever possible.

PUPIL'S LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- Wherever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside school time;
- Parents are requested to advise the school, by completing the Absence Request Form, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time;
- Pupils must come to the office to be signed out by their parent/carer on leaving the school and to be signed back in on their return;
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents must report to the school office to sign the pupil out;
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the police and register the pupil as a missing person.

WELL BEING & MENTAL HEALTH

As a school we are mindful that school absences occur for several reasons and some children are absent due to wellbeing/mental health issues including external medical appointments to meet these needs. Parents/Carers are asked to discuss their child's needs with the Headteacher.

DENTAL AND MEDICAL TREATMENTS

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school should be notified of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need parents/carers full support and co-operation to tackle this. The Department for Education and the Local Authority monitor levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools. Parents will be informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance when it is a cause for concern.

RESPONDING TO LATENESS

Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time.

Please note that, if pupils arrive after the school start time they will be recorded as late. School registers are closed at 9.15am (and pupils arriving after this time will be recorded 'as late after close of register' which counts as an unauthorised absence for that session. The pupil's name will be recorded in line with school procedures in case of emergency procedures/fire drills etc.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Service.

SETTING SCHOOL WORK TO COMPLETE DURING A FAMILY HOLIDAY

The school's policy is to not provide work for a child to complete during a family holiday.

Until teachers finish the teaching and marking for any particular week, the following week's learning and homework are not fully available. We have unit plans that we follow for teaching class work, but this is often adapted as we progress through a learning journey with the children. Homework is often planned in response to children's classwork and therefore not produced very far in advance. As a result work / homework is not necessarily ready for issue in the week before.

However we do encourage children to read, and practice their multiplication tables whilst they are away.

If a child is away for a longer period of time (i.e. more than two weeks) the school will discuss with the parents how to continue the learning during the absence. This might take the form of commercial maths workbooks, keeping a diary, etc.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Attendance at school is one of the most important factors in educational success. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holiday to be taken in term time.

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The request form can be obtained from the school office, from the school website and found in Appendix A of this policy. In the event that parental responsibility is shared both parents/carers will be informed.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. **Examples of exceptional circumstances, quoted by the Department for Education (DfE), are:** service personnel and family crisis. Family holidays taken during term time due to affordability or work restrictions do not meet the DfE criteria for authorisation. The Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Parents/carers who take their children out of school without authority for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive), will be liable to receive a penalty notice. Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child so a family of two parents and two children will receive 4 penalty notices.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Should absence be taken without the Headteacher's authorisation, parents may be issued with a penalty notice as a result, see below.

PENALTY NOTICES

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

If a parent/guardian elects for their child to be home educated then it is recommended that they inform the school and the Local Authority. In this instance we will refer to DfE guidance on Elective Home Education.



BUSBRIDGE CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to validate your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more will result in the following action being taken:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. *If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.*
3. *If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.*

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. In the absence of a decision, parents/carers cannot assume that permission for the absence has been given.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

